

SELF-SUFFICIENCY SERIES: SOLUTIONS FROM THE FIELD

PATHWAYS TO EMPLOYMENT



Program Type: Runaway and Homeless Youth Transitional Living Program

Agency and Location: Family Services of Northeast Wisconsin, Green Bay, Wisconsin

Population Served: Runaway and homeless youth, ages 16 to 22 years old

Program Description: The Family Services of Northeast Wisconsin receives runaway and homeless youth funding through the Family and Youth Services Bureau to operate a transitional living program (TLP), as well as Department of Labor Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) funding to operate “Pathways to Employment,” a youth employment program under the Bay Workforce Development Board of Green Bay Wisconsin. TLP youth who are referred to the “Pathways to Employment” Program work with a WIOA-funded case manager from Family Services of Northeast Wisconsin to develop their work readiness skills.

Using a strengths-based youth development model, the case managers assist each youth in choosing the best training/education path for them to find successful employment at a wage that allows them to achieve self-sufficiency. If a youth is interested in a specific career track, the Pathways to Employment program offers them a paid opportunity to job shadow, and pending a strong service plan, the Workforce Development Board may be able to assist with tuition and book reimbursement, among other items. This collaboration has proven to be very successful for the youth and the program, as youth are offered the opportunity to move forward from their current situations and develop the necessary technical skills to begin a career.

Results: Of the 15 TLP participants that were co-enrolled in the TLP and the Pathways to Employment program, Family Services of Northeast Wisconsin reports that 80 percent of the youth completed the Career Exploration curriculum, 73 percent became employed, and approximately one-third of the youth participants were enrolled in the Northeast Wisconsin Technical College preparing for careers in nursing and automotive.

Program Perspective: Agency staff say, “The collaboration with both the housing program and the WIOA program have been a fantastic wrap around service to the youth being served.” A current TLP youth provided the following positive feedback, “I am very thankful for all the help and am excited to move forward in school.”

The program has also helped a number of youth, including “Tamara Jenkins”, a 20-year-old mother of two, who enrolled in the Youth Work Experience program and soon realized that auto mechanics was her passion. The program connected her to an Auto Mechanics technical program at Northeast Wisconsin Technical College, where she is studying to be a Certified Auto Mechanic.

Federal Funding Streams Used: Transitional Living Program (Family and Youth Services Bureau, HHS) | Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act funding (Department of Labor)

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